

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9604

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, UK

SUBJ: CIVAIR - LAKER SKYTRAIN

REF: LONDON 3335

1. SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRADE, PETER SHORE, MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON MARCH 21 IN REPLY TO WRITTEN PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ON LAKER SKYTRAIN SERVICE:

"THE CAA CONCLUDED THAT SKYTRAIN SERVICE SHOULD NOT BE STARTED UNTIL THE NORTH ATLANTIC MARKET HAS RETURNED TO A HEALTHY RATE OF GROWTH AND THAT THIS IS UNLIKELY FOR AT LEAST 12 MONTHS AND PERHAPS LONGER. I AGREE. IT IS MY INTENTION TO CONSIDER SKYTRAIN AS PART OF MY REVIEW OF CIVIL AVIATION WHICH AMONG OTHER THINGS WILL BE CONSIDERING THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF SERVICE AFFORDED BY BRITISH AIRLINES. I SHALL, OF COURSE, TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE CAA'S CONCLUSIONS. I HOPE TO COMPLETE MY REVIEW BY SUMMER. IN THE MEANTIME, IT HAS BEEN MADE CLEAR TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT THAT WE EXPECT THEM TO TAKE NO ACTION WHICH WOULD PREJUDICE OUR RIGHT TO OPERATE SKYTRAIN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT.

MY DEPARTMENT IS ALSO PURSUING WITH THE US AUTHORITIES THE DESIRABILITY OF REMOVING CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON LAKER
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AIRWAYS CHARTER SERVICES WHICH WERE IMPOSED TWO YEARS AGO"

2. IT IS APPARENT FROM FOREGOING STATEMENT THAT BRITISH DO NOT BELIEVE IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR THEM NOW TO RENEW PRESSURES ON USG FOR ISSUANCE OF SKYTRAIN PERMIT WHILE IT IS STILL POSSIBLE THAT AVIATION POLICY REVIEW NOW UNDERWAY MIGHT FIND THERE IS NO PLACE FOR LAKER SKYTRAIN IN BRITISH AIR SERVICES TO THE US. ALTHOUGH CLEARLY BRITISH WOULD REACT STRONGLY IF US WERE TO DENY SKYTRAIN PERMIT WHILE POLICY REVIEW STILL PENDING, THEY WILL NOT AGITATE FOR ISSUANCE OF PERMIT UNTIL REVIEW COMPLETED. IF POLICY REVIEW CONFIRMS SKYTRAIN, BRITISH WILL DOUBTLESS EXPECT US PERMIT TO BE ISSUED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY. IT WORTH NOTING THAT BRITISH OFFICIALS CONSIDER THAT LAKER AIRWAYS, AS A DESIGNATED BRITISH CARRIER, IS ENTITLED TO US OPERATING PERMIT AND UNTIL PERMIT ISSUED OR DESIGNATION WITHDRAWN US IS, TECHNICALLY AT LEAST, IN BREACH OF BILATERAL AGREEMENT. VIEWED IN THAT WAY, US ISSUANCE OF SKYTRAIN PERMIT (WITH SERVICE COMMENCEMENT DATE AND PERHAPS OTHER CONDITIONS SUBJECT TO MUTUAL AGREEMENT) WHILE UK POLICY REVIEW STILL UNDERWAY WOULD NOT NECESSARILY BE REGARDED AS AWKWARD FOR UK OFFICIALS SINCE THEY REGARD FUTURE ROLE OF LAKER IN US/UK AIR SERVICES TO BE INTERNAL DECISION FOR BRITISH TO TAKE RATHER THAN ONE TO BE INFLUENCED BY US.

3. WOULD APPRECIATE COMMENTS OR GUIDANCE FROM DEPARTMENT WITH REFERENCE TO TRADE SECRETARY SHORE'S STATEMENT CONCERNING NO PREJUDICIAL US ACTION ON SKYTRAIN PERMIT AND RESTORATION OF LAKER'S AFFINITY CHARTER RIGHTS.

4. EMBASSY IS POUCHING (EB/OA-STYLES) COPIES OF LETTERS AMBASSADOR HAS RECEIVED FROM LAKER AND MP REGARDING SKYTRAIN PERMIT APPLICATION.

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Message Attributes

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